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SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND NEA/IPA, PRM FOR PRM/ANE; NSC FOR
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KUNDER/MCCLOUD/BORODIN/NANDY/LAUDATO

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SUBJECT: GAZA HUMANITARIAN UPDATE - JANUARY 10

REFTEL: Jerusalem 101

1. (SBU) Summary. All Gaza crossings were closed on January 10. UNRWA restarted coordination with the IDF following a meeting with GOI officials on January 9, and requested permission for trucks to enter Gaza on January 11. UNRWA shelters now hold more than 21,000 displaced people. Health, water, and sanitation systems remain under stress, but there have been improvements to the electricity grid that contacts hope will allow the power plant to resume operations. End Summary.

Crossings Update

2. (SBU) January 10: All crossings to Gaza are closed due to Shabbat.

3. (SBU) January 9: No aid shipments entered Gaza after the UN suspended movements. According to UN contacts, 41 private-sector truckloads entered via Kerem Shalom. A total of 14 truckloads of medical supplies, 11 Arab medics, and three ambulances entered through Rafah crossing.

UN to Resume Operations

4. (SBU) Following a meeting with GOI officials on January 9, UNRWA renewed coordination with the IDF on January 10 and planned to resupply its seven food distribution sites. UNRWA also delivered food and water to its 27 shelters. As of 1700 local on January 10, ICRC had not yet indicated when it will restart movements in Gaza.

5. (SBU) UNRWA contacts report GOI approval to bring in 40-45 trucks on January 11. Approximately five of these truckloads will consist of USAID assistance, including medical supplies, blankets, mattresses, food items, and plastic sheeting.

6. (SBU) The IDF announced a fourth "humanitarian pause" on January 10 between 1300 and 1600 local. Media sources in Gaza reported military operations in the Beit Hanoun and Jabaliya neighborhoods north of Gaza City during the time period.

Food/Shelter

7. (SBU) OCHA contacts report that approximately 90 percent of Gaza's population now depends on food assistance. The WFP distributed 44 metric tons of food to 770 families in Khan Yunis on January 9. No distribution took place in Gaza City. WFP reported plans to resume distribution in Gaza City on January 10. USAID Gaza staff reported that markets are "empty of people and goods."

¶8. (SBU) UNRWA contacts reported on January 10 that UNRWA is operating 27 emergency shelters with 21,555 displaced people.

Water and Sanitation

¶9. (SBU) UNICEF reported that, as of January 9, 80 percent of drinking water in Gaza is not safe for human consumption, according to WHO guidelines. OCHA contacts reported that sewage continues to overflow in many parts of northern Gaza, particularly in Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahiya, affecting almost 92,000 people in these areas alone. OCHA is particularly concerned about solid waste piling up at hospitals.

¶10. (SBU) Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) contacts in Gaza reported on January 10 that the offices of PWA's contractor for the World Bank-funded North Gaza Emergency Sewage Project had been hit by the IDF.

Power/Telecom

¶11. (SBU) According to OCHA contacts, the Gaza Electricity Distribution Company (GEDCO) reported two Israeli feeder lines each with a 26 MW capacity were re-connected on January 9. Two feeder lines still remain down, and internal network damage left 75 percent of Gaza City without power. GEDCO also reported that it received some spare parts (including 19 transformers) on January 9 and expected Gaza's power supply to improve in coming days, provided repair teams have access to repair the internal network and no further damage occurs.

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¶12. (SBU) Gaza power plant staff reported to EconOff that they are attempting to bring one of the plant's turbines back online. There were media reports on January 10 that a transformer in Rafah had been struck by IDF fire.

¶13. (SBU) Approximately 80-90 percent of the mobile service network remains down, according to OCHA estimates. OCHA contacts noted that a single remaining fiber optic cable connects Gaza to Israel. Damage to the cable would sever connections with the outside world and most internal telecommunication services.

Health

¶14. (SBU) WHO and medical contacts are concerned about the toll of the conflict on those suffering with chronic illnesses, which they assess are likely to result in more health issues in the long term. WHO contacts report that about 70 percent of chronic patients regularly attending primary healthcare centers have had to interrupt their treatment since hostilities began on December 27.

Cash

¶15. (SBU) UNRWA contacts reported on January 10 that UNRWA is arranging the delivery of cash, as approved by the GOI, with the Palestine Monetary Authority (PMA). UNRWA plans to transport the cash in armored vehicles via Erez crossing as early as January 11. PMA Governor Jihad al-Wazir reports that he does not have confirmation from the GOI of the total amount of cash approved for transport into Gaza, but he confirmed that Brinks has contacted Palestinian banks to arrange the transfer.

AMCIT Evacuations

¶16. (SBU) According to USAID officers, the GOI may approve AMCIT evacuation requests by Tuesday, January 13. ICRC has reported that it may try to move evacuees on January 14, but is unable to do so earlier. The Consulate and Embassy have agreed to an ICRC request to coordinate this evacuation of third-country nationals. (Canada coordinated the previous one.)

